

Food Fight - S1E8 - Can We Trust The Food We Eat.mp3

Matt Eastland [00:00:06] Hello and welcome to the Food Fight podcast. I'm Matt Eastland.

Lukxmi Balathasan [00:00:10] And I'm Lukxmi Balathasan and both Matt I are from EIT Food, Europe's leading food innovation initiative, working to make the food system more sustainable, healthy and trusted. Over the course of the series, we're inviting guests from all areas of food industry to talk to us about how we can tackle some of the world's biggest food challenges and fight for a better food future.

Matt Eastland [00:00:30] That's right. And on the podcast this week, we're dealing with trust issues. I'm not talking about my trust issues, but trust issues generally with food. So I think it's fair to say that our relationship with food has all got more complicated in recent years. So with the rise of clean eating movements, personal fitness and just general awareness of the sustainability of our food, the world seems to be more engaged than ever with the idea of eating well. But with new brands, products and advice coming at us from all angles, who can we really trust to give us the right information and help us to make better food choices?

Lukxmi Balathasan [00:01:06] So this is really interesting because nowadays were consciously bombarded with health food fads that are popularised by celebrities, who are really not even experts in this field. We have dubious Instagram nutritionists and dieticians, and in the product. Space we have problems with things like greenwashing, where words such as "organic" and "natural" and "sustainable" distract us all from actual nutritional information. For instance, really, what is a fat and sugar content and some of our food? So ultimately, in this podcast we're looking at, how can we trust the food we eat?

Matt Eastland [00:01:39] So I think this is a good point to welcome our guests who are going to help us through the topic today. With us, we have Anthony Warner, otherwise known as The Angry Chef. Anthony is known for his dedication to exposing lies, pretensions and ridiculousness in the world of food! He's written two books, Angry Chef: Bad Science and the Truth About Healthy Eating, and The Truth About Fat: Why Obesity is Not That Simple. Anthony that he's also been a chef in the industry for over 25 years. Hi, Anthony great to have you on the show.

Anthony Warner [00:02:11] Hello. Good to be here.

Matt Eastland [00:02:12] Excellent. And our second guest is Liesbet Vranklen, who joins us via the Internet from Leuven in Belgium, where she is an associate professor at KU leuven, which is a research university. And there Liesbet is involved in a number of EIT Food projects, including one called Trust Tracker, which is monitoring consumer confidence in the food sector over time - and we're all really looking forward to hearing more about it. Lisbet, welcome to the podcast.

Liesbet Vranken [00:02:39] Thank you. Nice to be here.

Lukxmi Balathasan [00:02:41] So Food Trust. So let's start at the beginning and talk about the how and why you've both got into this area. So, Anthony, beginning with you, how did you become The Angry Chef? I'm guessing it wasn't because you weren't just throwing pots and pans around the kitchen?

Anthony Warner [00:02:54] No, I do need to apologise for not being angry if people were expecting me to be shouting and screaming. No, the angry chef is a character that I wrote – I created a blog in 2016, which was really about, I was noticing a lot of stuff online, particularly on Instagram, where people talking about diet and nutrition, which for someone like me and I'm a chef, I have a science background, I'm interested in nutrition, I'm interested in health, I'm interested in the ways we can make people eat healthier. So that's my area. So I was interested that there was lots of people online talking about this. Actually, quite exciting, really. But when I started looking into a lot of the claims that people were making, a lot of the things that people were saying about food, there was a lot of misinformation out there. And a lot of return to some sort of misinformation which which I felt had been sort of successfully debunked several years ago, was kind of returning and in little enclaves on the Internet and various celebrities and sort of social media stars who are actually gaining quite a lot of traction and having quite a lot of influence. But in a way, you know, because it's a new medium, didn't have any cheques and balances. They were directly communicating some often quite harmful and dangerous misinformation with the public. And I sort of felt there was a need for someone to be saying something about it. So I created this character. I created this blog and an online social media presence of just someone who was shouting and ranting about those sort of things. And and, you know, for its sins it became reasonably popular because I think people were kind of a bit sick of being made to feel guilty about food, which is essentially one of our great pleasures. Everything I do is, I love food. So I almost felt like there was a the need to protect food from people selling misinformation. Because it's very easy for people to sell stuff by making people afraid of something. Making people afraid of what they're eating there is a good way to sell your product or sell your diet or sell your persona or sell yourself, you know... So so I was kind of acting, I think is food's protector. And it kind of caught on and became, you know, became reasonably popular and led to a couple of books. And I actually just finished writing a third book, actually. So yeah, that's kind of where the persona came from.

Lukxmi Balathasan [00:05:01] Oh, I'm looking forward to hearing more about this as we continue discussions. And you Liesbet... same question. So why has Food Trust become a central part of your work and why does it interest you specifically?

Liesbet Vranken [00:05:12] Well, in my own research, I'm quite concerned about the sustainability of our agri-food systems. And I think to move to more sustainable, more healthy agri-food systems, we need the involvement of both producers, farmers, but also processors, retailers, but also consumers actually - to try to steer them towards more sustainable, more healthy food patterns. And a lot of food we are buying, they have some credence characteristics. We cannot easily assess whether a certain food product is sustainable or whether it's healthy, for example. So if we want consumers to steer it towards more healthy products, they need to have trust in the actors in the food system and they need to have confidence also, that indeed, the products that they are buying are indeed safe at your healthy (as what is claimed). So therefore, my interests in consumer trust originates from that fact that, OK, if you want to induce behavioural changes towards more sustainable food patterns, we need to change consumer behaviour, and then this requires some trust in the products they are buying.

Matt Eastland [00:06:22] So that's really interesting. So you talk about consumer trust, but sort of looking at the food value chain, the food industry. So where in your opinion, along that kind of food value chain from your farm or all the way through to consumer, what where does trust start to fall down?

Liesbet Vranken [00:06:36] Well, I think you can have trust in all different actors, actually. And I think we looked in a study, particularly to the trust in farmers, in processors, in retailers, in authorities. And on average if I look to some of the figures, we see that in most countries (so we did some studying several regions) that they actually trust farmers is typically highest. Followed by trust in retailers, [then] trust in authorities, and in manufacturers. So it seems as if you have most trust in farmers – in the way they are producing our food, followed by retailers, authorities and manufacturers. Although, I must say the differences are rather small.

Matt Eastland [00:07:16] And Anthony, I'm keen to get your opinion on this. So from a chef's perspective, you know, who do you trust in the food industry?

Anthony Warner [00:07:23] There's an interesting debate to be had. I have quite a lot of trust in our modern food system and the way it's regulated. I think it's just reacting to what that level of trust people have. I think that has changed, actually. I think if you went back, you know, when I was working as a chef in restaurants and hotels into the mid 90s, towards the late 90s, certainly in this country, there wasn't that much trust placed in farmers. The farming system was constantly in the news for various scares – like BSE, and salmonella in eggs. And a lot of stuff happened around that time. And there was always a story on the front page of the paper saying, you know, "farmers doing this..." and I think there was a lot of mistrust with farmers. And actually, if you went to manufacturers and brands, we kind of liked those big brands, like certain Cadbury's and Nestlé, and we kind of had a bit more trust in them. And I think that shifted over time. I mean, I don't have empirical data to support that, but I feel that that's sort of been a real shift. And so that trust has changed, perhaps because some of the practices of food industries have become called into question as we've had more problems with non-communicable diseases and the rise of obesity and type 2 diabetes over that time. I think a lot of that's been pushed back onto the manufacturers. Retailers seem to go away quite likely as far as I'm concerned! But trust fails when people have reason to mistrust things and people find out about practices that they are uncomfortable with.

Matt Eastland [00:08:41] Okay. So do we as consumers need to worry about anything? And if we do need to worry about anything, what is it?

Anthony Warner [00:08:48] That I think people have to eat three times a day and life would be so much better if we just didn't worry so much about the food we eat. I think the actual act of worry and the process of being anxious about everything we eat, is extremely harmful for us. People should just be able to relax about individual eating occasions, I think, and I try to encourage people to do as much as possible. But wider they're so system things, yeah, we should be worrying and we should be holding the food system to account.

Matt Eastland [00:09:13] Okay.

Liesbet Vranken [00:09:14] I do agree indeed when you say "people shouldn't worry too much" because I do agree that most of our foods are indeed safe. However, we see that consumers are not only concerned about food safety, we see more and more that people are also motivated towards healthy eating, but also towards sustainable living, for example. So I think this is also something where trusting your different food actors is rather important, actually.

Matt Eastland [00:09:38] And do you think, Lisbet that (And I guess this is probably a question to Anthony as well) do you think that food producers, manufacturers are opening themselves up more? Do you think they're more transparent than they used to be? I mean, I agree, I've sat on a consumer panel and people have said, "I don't understand what's going on. That's why I don't really trust it." So do you think that it's getting better?

Liesbet Vranken [00:10:00] Well, I think yes and no actually. On the one hand, I think manufacturers and retailers, are realising that actually consumers care more and more - not only about safety, but also healthiness, about sustainability and those aspects. So retailers and manufacturers start to realise it more and they really want to take that into account. I think, for example, if you look at France, Belgium, I think Germany is following now, they all introduced nutri-scores. Probably you have heard about it – the "ABCE" colour labelling of our food products, depending on the nutritional composition. This has been an initiative of retailers, they themselves. So it was not any regulation that enforced them to do so. So this was free choice of them to introduce it into market and I think this is really in response to how the feeling that consumers are asking. They feel consumers care about it and want to meet their concerns and to make sure they can take nutritional quality into account and try to be more open and transparent. At the same time, what we see also, is we have a lot of information that is thrown at the consumer. And some consumers, they just don't know it in the end. And I think this is a bit problematic because if you have so many labels, going from different Fairtrade labels, over organic labels, over bioorganic labels, over Rainforest Alliance... Well, I think there are dozens, dozens of labels in the EU... And that confuses us, of course. And I think this is a bit problematic because if you have so much information thrown at you at the end, you just stick with your regular choice. I mean, you don't have this kind of choice deferral, you observe. So I think there, there's is probably still some role to play to, maybe get some basic messages out so that consumers are not too confused about all the labels.

Matt Eastland [00:11:52] Yeah, I think that's an excellent point actually. And Anthony I wonder, you know, when we talk about overload of information and, you know, "myths" in the food system, you know, a lot of what you do is about debunking those myths and challenging pseudo science. So in your opinion, what are the most scandalous stories of misinformation that you've seen and you're desperate to fight against?

Anthony Warner [00:12:16] Well, I mean, there's various ones connected to health and diets, and I'm pretty much anti any sort of prescriptive diet, if I'm really honest. I've seen several that have claimed to cure various diseases; claim to cure cancer, claims to cure autism, claims to cure all sorts of things, some of which aren't... Is ridiculous. And you sort of laugh about it to an extent, but it's also extremely harmful, you know especially for clinicians working in cancer care, you know. They've got patients coming in saying, "I've gone on this very restrictive diet and..." you know, which is incredibly harmful for someone's someone's treatment and recovery. So that that is sort of most egregious ones. But I think there is a more of a problem, more generally, with the food system generally... is again echoing what has just been said about the amount of information people are being given, and this idea that we constantly just need to give consumers more and more information to make them behave better. You know, the things that really undermine healthy eating, undermine more sustainable dietary patterns, they're not the aggregate of consumer choice, it's systemic barriers to people doing certain things. But the kind of food industry generally has this get-out clause "Well, we'll just give consumers loads of information. And if they make the bad decisions and they do the thing that they're not supposed to be doing, it's their fault and it's not ours. And we'll hold our hands up". And I think that's an inherent level of misinformation from the entire food industry that is just

pushing the problem back onto consumers and blaming them rather than saying we need to fundamentally change the food system to make it more sustainable - or we need to fundamentally change our society almost to make healthy eating choices. People want ways to navigate the world in a simple fashion but often these things are very complex and very difficult to give people a single metric to say, this is what you should be doing.

Lukxmi Balathanan [00:14:01] And I think that "trust experts" is quite interesting. Because I feel like this whole movement as food, as medicine is quite interesting. For example, where do these fads come from? Is turmeric the cure-all for every single ailment under the sun?

Anthony Warner [00:14:17] Well, no no, it's definitely not. I wouldn't want to go into that too deeply, but no, that's definitely true. And no food is, you know, no foods like gonna "cure" you. I'm really anti any idea that we should ever "think food is medicine". I hate that because food is so much more to medicine. It's it's cultural, and it brings togetherness, and it's pleasure, and it's enjoyment, and should never be penance... And like "oh god I've got to eat this kale smoothie, which is disgusting". You know, why would you eat something [that's disgusting] unless you assign it some sort of magical qualities... Which it just doesn't have! A lot of it does come from that mistrust of the pharmaceutical industry, mistrust of modern medicine. And mistrust in modern medicine - I'd just go back 200 years and say, you know, "would you want modern medicine as we have it?", and people would say "Of course, of course we do!" But there is this mistrust in it, because I guess we lead these sort of easy, sanitised lives and it's very easy to play on people's fears when they don't have a lot of time to think about these things. You see it in politics, you see "make America great again" or "take my country back" it's always like appealing to this past time when things were "great". That's a very easy thing to do. It's a cognitive trap that we're very inclined to fall into. And part of that is saying, yeah, so here's this traditional recipe from 'ancient wherever' that 'people have used for centuries'. And you think, well, people weren't that healthy centuries ago. And I think part of it is if you're a small person on the Internet selling a diet, you can't create a medicine. So you have to go for something where regulation isn't quite the same. You can't you can't get licence for a new medicine, but you can sell someone a food product and insinuate that maybe it's good for a certain thing... Or you can get a supplement or something. So it's never going to happen but it would make me really happy if we couldn't make any health claims connected to food at all.

Lukxmi Balathanan [00:16:01] I would back you on that,.

Liesbet Vranken [00:16:03] I fully agree that not one one single food item can have the same influence as a medicine or anything. But I do think, of course food patterns can be more healthy or not. And I think this is something we should maybe stress towards consumers. It's not that one candy, that one product with a bit more meat, more of fat, for example, makes a difference. But you have to look at the whole pattern – that can make a difference. There are a lot of studies that certain diets, for example, more Mediterranean diet or a more vegetarian diet, that this is typically associated with less diseases or risk for certain diseases.

Matt Eastland [00:16:43] I think for me, it comes down to the fact that, as you you say, there's too much information. It's all very confusing. I mean, Liesbet, I mean, is this why this Trust Tracker project you're working on... Is it is this why you're trying to do this because you're trying to provide evidence to this?

Liesbet Vranken [00:16:59] Well, I think that there's more and more attention in consumer trust from different angles, actually, from different actors in the food chain. On the one hand, this can be from certain processors. For example, if they bring new food on the market... if these are food products with credence characteristics, will consumers trust it? Will they buy it? With links to certain food scandals this might have led to lower levels of trust. But also, if you want to induce behavioural shifts in consumer behaviour, then it's needed that consumers trust the information that is provided. To gets insights on what forms trust, what affects trust. So this is the reasons why we started looking into this, in monitoring and measuring trust.

Matt Eastland [00:17:47] Okay. And you're obviously looking across that kind of whole chain, you know, from farmer to consumer. So I guess the question, you know, because you're both sort of saying that when it gets the consumer side, it's all very difficult. So that whole trust piece, should it just be taken care of by the time it gets the consumer. Anthony do you think that's ever possible where consumers just don't have to worry about it?

Anthony Warner [00:18:11] I think there will always be money to be made making people feel afraid. And, you know, the food industry does its fair share of that in trying to sell people... by implication "this is a healthier version" implies what you're eating is rubbish. So it's very difficult to sell people benefit without denigrating what they are doing now. So I think that's a very difficult thing to fight, you know. Trust is an interesting thing. I don't believe you can or should even expect to be able to make someone trust you, because that's not really in your control. What you have to do is act in a trustworthy fashion and be open and communicate and also show people what you're doing. Act in a trustworthy way, which the food and she doesn't always do. And let's be honest, there are examples... We have a great food system which is incredibly safe, but there are examples of bad practise, and in the food industry itself needs to call that to account and make sure people know about that when that happens.

Liesbet Vranken [00:19:11] So that leads well into some questions we've had from social media. So the first question is, "how do I know if claims made by food brands are genuine or a marketing ploy?"

Anthony Warner [00:19:23] They're always a marketing ploy? They might be genuine and marketing ploy isuppose. How do you know? I mean, I think certainly for big food brands, you know, obviously that there's very strict regulations about what they can and can't say. And I'd like to think that most of them do comply with that. There's a few that don't (even including some of the big companies) and I'm especially keen to call them out when they say that a product will "detox you" or a product will "alkalise your body" or something like that.

Liesbet Vranken [00:19:54] Keywords; like 'detox' is a good one!

Anthony Warner [00:19:56] I mean, like I said, personally I think any sort of health claims... I think I would just remove all health claims from food... And that's not going to happen. I know, but I mean, a lot of them are, you know, "sort-of" evidence based, but still I'm very suspicious of. You know, people will make a small pot of dairy drink, for instance, and make a health claim connected to that small part of dairy drink. But not kind of explained to consumers, that the actual health claim is due to the fact that they fortified that with vitamin in which they can make that health claim on. I personally think that that sort of thing is disingenuous. So I would encourage everybody, whatever the claims are, not to idolise certain foods. Yes, dietary patterns are incredibly important. So, yes, I mean,

you can be fairly certain there's good evidence behind any claim on a major brand in a major supermarket. Healthy shops - they're a totally different world. I walk round them with people I know who work in legislation and they're just like "Oh my God, why are they saying all this stuff, which they just legally shouldn't be allowed to say". I would just ignore them in a way.

Matt Eastland [00:20:57] And Lisbet, Anthony mentioned health food shops and some of the guidelines. Do you think from your research that these guidelines and labels are strict enough?

Liesbet Vranken [00:21:10] I think so. It's very hard to put certain regulation on some of those things. The claims are also so diverse. I think it's more important that, for example, that way they promise that is in there, that the content is really what it is. I think there's a role for the government. You had some scandals about certain honey, that they the added sugar to it, for example. So I think there is an important role, I think, for the government to control those things. Certain claims are also very hard to verify. So it's also hard to prove that they are wrong, for example. So then then it becomes difficult to make strict regulation on it. But I think it's more important to have good regulations and that the product indeed contains the content that the producer is indicating on on the label.

Matt Eastland [00:22:07] And Anthony do you agree? Are they strict enough?

Anthony Warner [00:22:07] I mean, I think the regulations are probably strict... a few things that might change, but the regulations are probably strict enough... They're just not enforced. Especially on social media advertising. I mean, the Advertising Standards, in this country do a reasonable job of trying to pick that stuff up. But, you know, some stuff is being advertised and some are claims being made for food online from big social media influencers. You know, it's horrendous.

Matt Eastland [00:22:33] Do you have any examples of what what's really, really upset you.

Anthony Warner [00:22:37] Do you want me to name names? I mean, the various sort of Kardashian endorsed slimming products let's say. You know, I think the claims being made on them are horrendous and they're not evidence-based and those sort of claims should not be allowed. I mean, I can think of a number of products which were sell themselves as "detox products" as I said. You know, there's various teas from major brands (owned by very big companies sold in big supermarkets)... weight loss teas as well, which are basically just laxatives. So nice. Yeah. Which I guess in huge quantities will make you lose weight, but not in a healthy or sustainable way. But yeah, I mean, I do feel that there are quite good regulations in place regarding health claims. But I will walk round these sort of exhibitions, where you've got health food brands, start ups, with their products displayed, making these grand claims for various health conditions they can "treat", and I say, "you do know you can't actually legally say that on pack?" and they're like "what? But it does... I read it on a website that it can... that turmeric can cure inflammation". But you can't say that! But people still will because there's so many of these little brands and so many of these little companies that, regulations exist, but they're not enforced to a huge amount. And you only have to walk around any healthy food shop, including the big high street ones and could find a hundred claims which shouldn't be allowed.

Lukxmi Balathanan [00:24:03] And just picking up on your social media thing, I find that really interesting because that's a huge influence now. Its a good way to sell product. And I

know recently there's been a campaign called I-Weight that has really worked with Instagram and Facebook to actually no longer be able to advertise anything [claiming to be] "supplements to lose weight". So, you know, we talk about governments, the food industry, but actually, should the big social media giants now be responsible?

Anthony Warner [00:24:30] Should social media giants be responsible? Discuss. I mean yes! They certainly should and I mean, some people were picked up in the news yesterday, actually about four making claims about weight loss products and certainly advertising them in a way which was perhaps too dangerous to some of the consumers. In the fact, that they are people who clearly don't need to lose weight. It's why I started writing is that social media, particularly, is this mine of misinformation where you create these little information bubbles, which are extremely troubling, you know. Let's be honest, though – we're losing the battle on vaccines. Food is probably down the list in some ways, with someone health claims on food. So, yes, I don't quite know how that can be done. But, yes, we need to call out social media.

Liesbet Vranken [00:25:14] I'm wondering then.... it will be very hard. You have a lot of fake news on social media, on a lot of topics... and how to to limit that... So then I'm sometimes wondering, shouldn't there not be one simple, clear message that is [shared] by different governments on what a healthy diet is? Eat a lot of variation. A lot of fruits, lots of vegetables. Don't overdo any product. But I mean, OK, it's fine if you eat some meat, but don't overdo it... And things like that. Isn't this something they're dismissing? Because we probably can never control all media, all social media. This is a big issue. I'm wondering sometimes whether that this may be a more realistic option, to try to stress that more.

Lukxmi Balathasan [00:25:56] Yeah. So to both of you, where can consumers go to get trusted information?

Anthony Warner [00:26:01] I always say the best information is going to come from big reputable authorities. You know, in the U.K. you'd look for healthy eating information from the NHS. You know, controversial things like that. But I think we all don't really understand the difference between... well what a registered dietitian is, is a registered health care professional. A "nutritionist" is... Well, I mean, there are qualified nutritionist, but also anyone can call themselves a nutritionist online and often quoted in newspapers "a nutritionist said" when they don't really have any proper nutrition qualifications. I mean, I go the NHS, I go to the British Dietetic Association and the big institutions. I think I probably agree. I actually don't think there's much information people need about healthy eating. I think you can probably write down on the back of a postcard what what people should know. You know, lots of fruit and vegetables...

Matt Eastland [00:26:49] I'm going to need that postcard...

Anthony Warner [00:26:50] Haha but don't over do it on meat. Probably about it... Or some oily fish now and again, I think we don't want to overload people with information, but, you know, we should have consistency of information coming out. But I also slightly worry that at some times in the way a lot of media is disseminated, if there is a universal message from every single government and authority, people say, "oh, yeah, that's a conspiracy". So you end up with all sorts of problematic things. I mean, the way to get around that, I suppose, is to have that message endorsed by people who people inherently trust. Let's get David Attenborough to do it and we'll all be fine! You know, faceless

government authorities telling you what the best way to eat is, is never gonna be a popular sell.

Lukxmi Balathasan [00:27:38] No!

Matt Eastland [00:27:38] And Liesbet. I mean, I think picking up what Anthony is saying there. So based on what your findings from your research and the Trust Tracker... is there anyone that could take on that role of "trusted information giver"? I mean, you mentioned the farmers, but, can you ever see a time where it's just farmers on social media giving us the information we need about how to eat healthily? Is that going to happen?

Liesbet Vranken [00:28:00] No, no, no. I think when I was mentioning earlier, OK, if we look at the different actors, we have maybe most trust in farmers. But I don't think these should be the ones in social media promoting certain diets. I think there, probably there is a much bigger role for some celebrities that people trust. That indeed some celebrities, well-known people, are indeed bringing the evidence-based messages on what are healthy diets. But probably the message should come from different angles. Not only the government, not only celebrities, not only scientists... from all of them. If more people would bring that same message. And I personally, I think a lot of consumers are not very aware of what a healthy diet is actually. We did a very small test, preliminary test, where we created an online shopping environment and where we, on the one hand, introduced some labels in that shopping environment and saw then and what type of product, how the food basket looked of those shoppers. But then in some cases, we had a treatment where we just brought a very simple message [saying] "you're were expected to..." (I don't know by heart) "to eat 400 grams of fruit and vegetables per day.... 100 grams of meat... And if it's red meat, only 60g of meat". That simple message, very simple message had actually the most, impact on the composition of the food basket. On the one hand, I thought, "okay, this is good news..." But at the same time I was a bit like, "oh my God, this also means that consumers are still not yet fully aware of what a healthy meal looks like or a healthy diet looks like". So maybe we should try to put some emphasis on those aspects, things that are evidence based, that are supported widely by scientists, to promote those things.

Anthony Warner [00:29:56] I think it's a very good point that you need people influencing in many, many different ways. You can't just say "what we're gonna do is run a massive television campaign with lots of adverts". You need people at almost every level disseminating information and talking about things in a sensible way, you know. So I write a blog and some books and occasionally for newspapers. I do my sort of thing, which speaks to my audience. But I certainly won't reach everybody doing that. I only reach a very small number of people, but I'd encourage people to be making videos. I'd encourage people to be communicating on various different social media channels. I'd encourage people to be, you know, writing if that's what they do, or creating different sorts of content, which is going to appeal to different groups of people and get good information out there. And just for us to inspire a huge number of people to be really, really, really passionate, I think, generally speaking, one of the most important things we can do (and it doesn't just apply to food, but, you know, that's what I'm interested in) is perhaps sort of change the way we educate about science, you know, because when I went to school, you were just taught that science is a list of facts. Whereas actually science is a method of critically appraising information and doing it and designing experiments and testing and this being very critical and doubting what you hear and looking for evidence. And it's a way of getting closer to the truth. And I think if we taught that from schools, you would just create a world where people were more critical of the information and were given and looked for, you know, rather than just sort of retaking everything you read at face value or thinking

because something's high up in a Google search is more likely to be true. You know, people would actually look at things and critically appraise. And I think if we can create a world where that is more the case, you will have a better chance of people actually critically appraising things for themselves.

Matt Eastland [00:31:48] And Elizabeth, do you agree with that?

Liesbet Vranken [00:31:51] Yes, I tend to agree indeed that we should educate our consumers to be critical indeed. And learn not to believe anything blindly. I mean they should be critical themselves. But I think it will be a combination of things. On the one hand we we need to learn and to be critical. At the same time, we also know that a lot of food decisions are actually taken very unconsciously. Often we don't think about it. We take the products that we know that are most easily available and things like that. And also there I think schools [and] governments can play a role as well, because this might be the location where they try to get in contact with certain foods - where they get acquainted with them, and try to create a habit of eating of healthy foods.

Matt Eastland [00:32:42] I love that. So guys I mean, we're both nearly out of time. But before you go, I wanted to ask you... we tend to ask, I guess, this question because it gives some interesting responses.... If you could rip up the food industry and start again. I mean, we're literally talking control + alt + delete here. How would you redesign the food industry to build in the right level of trust and transparency from the ground up from the start?

Anthony Warner [00:33:08] Well, I mean, that's a very difficult question. I think the most fundamental things that need to change about the food industry are the fact that there's certain sorts of foods [that are] far more profitable to grow and sell, and they're the ones that sort of the marketing muscle tends to get put behind. So I think you sort of fundamentally to restructure the way we farm and the way we subsidise agriculture, particularly, you know. The one lever, I believe, that'd make a massive difference to our food system, is repurposing a lot of the subsidies in agriculture to get behind things which are more sustainable, to get to a place where food is produced in a better way.

Matt Eastland [00:33:49] Amazing. And what about you, Lisbet? How would you change the industry from the beginning?

Liesbet Vranken [00:33:53] What might also help – if you have with all the technologies we have now to increase transparency and openness... I think if consumers even if they wouldn't do it... But just the fact that they have the ability to check where the food comes from and what path it has followed from farm to fork, for example. I think that would also already help. Just providing them that information, though it often remains a bit of a black box for them. And even if you could think of having some information, QR codes, for example, that you could scan, even if they [the consumer] wouldn't check on it every time they buy the food, because people won't do it, but the fact that it might be there might also, create some or increase trust in the actors.

Matt Eastland [00:34:38] Wonderful. Thank you.

Lukxmi Balathasan [00:34:38] Thanks. We're ready to wrap up. So if you can both tell us a little bit more about where people can find out more about your work, Anthony.

Anthony Warner [00:34:46] Yes you can buy my books and also I have a website and a blog which is angry-chef.com (I think). And you can follow me on Twitter and I do quite a lot on Facebook, if you want.

Lukxmi Balathasan [00:34:55] What's your Twitter handle?

Anthony Warner [00:34:57] @one_angry_chef

Lukxmi Balathasan [00:35:00] Brilliant. What about you Liesbet? Where can people find more information about your work.

Liesbet Vranken [00:35:05] Well, I must say, I'm not that active in social media. I have a Twitter account, but I'm not using that that frequently. And for the rest I think most can be found on the website of the university, actually, where you if you would Google my name, you enter the University Web site - where you'll find information on my research as well as some publications and presentations.

Lukxmi Balathasan [00:35:26] And what about the trust tracker?

Liesbet Vranken [00:35:28] I think for that I would redirect them to the website of EIT Food. There should be a link.

Lukxmi Balathasan [00:35:36] Ok back to the evidence and good science.

Matt Eastland [00:35:38] I love that. So guys, it's just up to me to say thank you both so very much for your time. Another fascinating podcast, this one talking about trust. So thank you and goodbye for next time.

All [00:35:50] Okay. Thank you. Okay.